

DIRECT ACTION VERSUS POLITICAL ACTION

The difference between I. W. W. non-political actionist, and the political action socialist, is the fundamental difference between anarchism and socialism, the difference between riot and order. The man or woman who rejects political action as the method for obtaining ownership and possession of the expropriated wealth of the proletariat now in the possession and ownership of the capitalist, rejects the methods of civilization and harkens back to the methods of barbarism and savagery.

He voluntarily abandons all that has been gained through all the ages of the upward struggle of the race and appeals once more to the bullet and the bayonet—to the tooth and the claw—as the arbiters of his fate. If we pause for a moment to remember that these means of warfare are now in the hands of the master class through its control of the army and the navy, the militia and the police, the law and the courts, we can at once realize the fatuous and the impotent position of the direct actionist, for these brutal agencies of capitalism act at its behest through capitalism's control of the political institutions of the city, state and nation.

The direct actionist seeks to accomplish in an illegal way a purpose which may be accomplished in a perfect legal way. Thereby he places himself beyond the pale of civilization and gives to his adversaries the vast advantage in the contest, of civil and military authority, as well as the weight of that public sentiment without which it is almost impossible for any cause to triumph.

Whatever may be our individual opinions, the vast majority of mankind is law-abiding. When we realize that this attitude of the universal mind towards lawful and orderly procedure is the creation of countless thousands of years of human experience and education, it is then that we perceive the hopelessness of the position of the non-political direct-actionist proletariat. So all-powerful is the sway over the human mind of this regard for authority and orderly legal procedure in all human affairs that it has robbed every forcible revolution in human history of its victory. The masters have never failed to use this power to re-seat themselves on the backs of the workers, after every cataclysmic epoch in the history of the race. It remains to be seen whether, in the present crisis of the world's history, the workers have gained wisdom enough from the centuries of experience to adopt the tactics of their masters and avail themselves of the reverence of the human mind for orderly legal procedure or whether they will repeat the fundamental error of the ages and appeal to that brute force which defeats its own purpose by reason of its repugnance to the universal mind of mankind.

To undo this fundamental work of the centuries is the task to which the I. W. W. direct actionist essays; to take advantage of this fundamental work of the centuries and direct it to the accomplishment of his own emancipation is the work and plan of the political socialist. Which appeals to you as being the most reasonable, the most feasible? Which plan attacks the capitalist system at the point of least resistance?—Braueret Zeitung.